

C. H. S.

# BANDWAGON

JUNE, 1953

25c



**EZRA STEPHENS WITH WAINO AND PLUTANO**

(See article on page 3)

# CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## The Editor Says

It is only about six weeks until Convention time. Have you made your vacation arrangements to coincide with the dates —August 7, 8 and 9. This is truly something you don't want to miss. Dr. Frischkorn has been working for two years to make this a success and the entertainment he has lined up for us is really something. Then, the fellowship of meeting other enthusiasts and renewing old friendships is a treat. I hope you Eastern members will avail yourselves of this opportunity of meeting the President and other faithful members.

Make your hotel reservations, get your scrapbooks ready, and be off to Norfolk.

## AN APOLOGY

On the cover of the Mid-May issue we used a cut of an ad for Nixon & Kemp's Great Eastern Circus, 1857. Under this it read "See page 10." This should have read page 3.

## THANKS

Thanks to Dick Conover for information and suggestion for Jake Posey's birthday. Wonderful idea.

# Originator of the Bannerline Termed "Barnum of Maine"

By John C. Kunzog

"And what you see on the banners on the outside, you'll witness in living reality on the inside." The chant of the barker in front of the sideshow before the advent of the loudspeaker, when the spieler, in stentorian tones, drew vivid word pictures of the wonders on exhibition. And flapping in the breeze, colorful banners depicting in allegorical style the mystery of mysteries, that no man in his right mind would deprive himself of viewing and thus increase his knowledge of the wonders of Nature.

Today the circus scene remains much the same; the colorful bannerline is a vital part of every circus midway, only the barker has been replaced by a mechanical loudspeaker, eliminating the need of a man with a strong, musical voice to sing the praises of the wonders within.

Who was the father of the sideshow? Whose fertile brain conceived the gaudy bannerline? None other than Ezra Stephens, "The Barnum of Maine," whose active brain visualized the possibilities of obtaining two admissions from one patron.

The time was in the early 1850's. Ezra Stephens was the owner of a small country store at Bryant Pond, a small village nestling at the foot of Mount Christopher in the state of Maine. Attending the county fair at Paris, Me., Stephens found a show man who had become stranded at that place and for a small pecuniary consideration took over a trained bear that the man was exhibiting.

Stephens proved himself a first-class showman in presenting this bear to the public, so he decided that the amusement world was his forte and commenced adding to his attractions. What to offer the public was never a problem with him, as he emulated the efforts of P. T. Barnum, and in the early years the attractions Barnum was exhibiting in his American Museum would find a counterpart in the Stephens' show. He had added to his collection of wild animals, the equine acts were on par with other shows of the period, and the acrobats were performing with the same dexterity as their contemporaries of other road shows; but Ezra Stephens was not satisfied. There was too much overhead for the receipts grossed. In the store Stephens always was conscious of freight charges; the higher the shipping costs, the greater the retail markup. Ruminating over his past experiences he figured thusly: When he was exhibiting only the bear, his expenses were quite low; now that he was offering a full scale circus exhibition his admission was but slightly greater than what people were willing to pay to see Mr. Bruin go through his antics. His tonnage haul was considerable; the cost of loading and unloading the wagons; the hours of labor involved in raising and striking the tents; and the increased payroll for the larger personnel, were factors to be reckoned with.

At that period the art of pitching tents had not been reduced to the science it is today, so that all circuses of that time used several tents for their exhibition; a condition that still prevailed into the

early 1890's. As 25c to 50c was the usual price of admission, according to the financial conditions of the community, Ezra Stephens decided to put into practice a segregation law of his own. In one tent was the main show, in another were the animals; in still another the horses and ponies. The trained bears and other rare exhibits occupied another tent. Ezra decided that thenceforth the latter tent should require an additional fee, and proceeded to add to these attractions to induce the public to willingly pay to enter this tent, which he graciously termed an "Annex."

In those days sideshow features were not readily obtainable, so the redoubtable Ezra put his mind to work and offered the admission-paying public the very features he believed they would like to see, his outstanding brainchild being, no doubt, the dancing turkeys; a feature that drew gasps of wonderment from the spectators, and, perchance induced many a lad, imbued with the spirit of being a showman, in spending countless hours to achieve the same results with his fowls, but without success.

Just before the dancing turkeys were put on exhibition, a charcoal fire was placed under the steel platform on which the birds were to perform. Having thus prepared the stage,, the turkeys were taken from their coops and placed in the large cage with the warmed floor. The birds would life one foot and then the other, as the heat of the platform prevented them from standing on both legs in comfort. An old hand organ gave out undulcet strains, but to the spectators the birds seemed to keep perfect rhythm. It was an act that never failed to please.

With Ezra Stephens one exhibit begot another. When a sea captain offered him a South American cockatoo, the price seemed excessive and the deal was not consummated. Arriving home, Stephens found the feminine members of the family engaged in dyeing wool and other stuffs. Immediately there was born in the active mind of the great showman a South American cockatoo "made in the U.S.A." From his flock of chickens he selected a large, white Leghorn pullet and proceeded to color her feathers from the dye-pots being used by the women. Blue, brown, red and yellow, and a blending of these colors, carefully applied while the hapless, prospective cockatoo lay helplessly bound. The legs and feet were painted a deep brown to further disguise the origin, and the rainbow-hued debutante of the fowl world was then crowned with a top-knot of colored feathers. As Stephens could not use a mordant to make the coloring permanent, extreme care was taken that this exhibit would not get wet, lest the fowl lose its coloring—and pulling powers.

A sea captain had promised to deliver a sea serpent, but as time went on this wonder of the briny deep failed to make its appearance. Stephens sincerely wanted such an attraction for the new season, and, undaunted by the non-arrival of the denizen of the ocean, he proceeded to build a reasonable facsimile. A wire frame was made, which was covered with soft leather. Its mouth was painted red, and when it was opened it looked large enough to swallow a person. Invisible threads, properly manipulated, caused the creature to writhe and open its mouth. It was exhibited in front of a marine backdrop and measured forty feet in length, separating in the middle to facilitate transportation.

Ezra Stephens was a believer in mob psychology when it helped to enrich his coffers. Ice had a way of disappearing in the lemonade, thus adding to the overhead. To eliminate this phase of operating expense he procured from the Sandwich Glass Works, of near Boston, while playing in that vicinity, a large piece of transparent glass resembling a chunk of ice, and this bit of deception cooled the lemonade on the Stephens' show for many years.

As was the custom in the early days of circusdom, the title of the show was frequently changed. Ezra Stephens adopted the name of Den Stone for his first entertainment venture. The "Den" being acquired from the extent of his show—a "den" of bears. He retained this sobriquet throughout his long years of showmanship, but changed the surname frequently.

The first few years he trouped as Den Stevens, and later, as the show grew, to Den Stephens. The suffix "Show" being usually supplied by the townspeople, it was later acquired into the title. As Stephens added to his show, he would add to his title, and in the early 70's the outfit was known as Den Stephens' Menagerie; still later as Stephens' Menagerie and Museum; the Great Diamond Circus, and finally, the Diamond Circus and Australian Menagerie.

The show was a wagon show, with winter quarters at Bryant Pond, Maine. The itinerary, which seldom changed from year to year, took in all the important New England towns and extended into eastern New York state. Until the 80's the advance billing was but a day or two ahead of the show, as there was no scheduled route. Stephens would remain in a town as long as the returns justified it, sometimes playing a stand for two weeks. The hauls were typical mud show jumps of from 10 to 15 miles, never over 20.

When Stephens decided to jump, he would dispatch a couple of men to the next stand with a mere handful of bills to announce their arrival. Newspaper publicity was seldom resorted to as most papers were weeklies and their publication dates seldom coincided with the show dates, although Stephens was not adverse to using this medium of publicity when advantageous to do so.

Posters were tacked up in postoffices, taverns, blacksmith shops, the town hall, at watering troughs and crossroad stores. Such a modicum of publicity would be decried by circus men today, yet the returns were all that could be asked for, as the tents were usually well filled. In the later years, Stephens was a trifle more lavish with his paper, but not to the extent of his contemporaries, and for that reason his bills are rare collector's items.

Ezra Stephens was a progressive as well as aggressive showman. He kept well abreast of the times, and was quite frequently in the vanguard. When the illustrious P. T. Barnum would bring out a new feature, it was a foregone conclusion that a similar act or exhibit would be on the billing of the Stephens' show. When Barnum introduced Zeo, in her famous slide for life down a rope from the center pole hanging by her hair, Stephens presented to his audience the Circassian Beauty, who emulated in every detail the achievements of Zeo. With her long hair tied to a steel ring this comely lady held the Down Easterners enthralled as she ascended the rope ladder, in accompaniment of band music, to the apex of the tent. There was never a sound from the audience as she nonchalantly attached

the ring to a pulley that rode on a rope. For several moments she stood poised on a small platform at perfect ease, while the hearts of the spectators were beating almost audible sounds. With her handkerchief she signaled, and the band struck up with a stirring march. Wafting a kiss to the audience the Circassian Beauty stepped off into space and was whirling toward the ground, gaining momentum every second. Men gasped, women screamed, occasionally one fainted, at the daring of this sensational act—an act that would receive but small billing today.

While Barnum was offering the world Tom Thumb, Stephens was quick to offer Major Robert Harner, 18 years old, 40 inches tall, weighing 48 pounds. Waino and Plutano, midgets, were also with the Stephens show. They were 50 years old, weighing 45 pounds each.

Ponies were a feature with the show and made a hit with the children. These ponies gave fathers a valid excuse to take the children to the show—as good a reason as the elephants in the larger aggregations.

Following the Civil War and the trek to the West began, people became interested in the animal of the plains called the buffalo, and many intrepid huntsmen went to the plains country to shoot these animals. Stephens sent his emissaries to the West for buffaloes, too, but not to shoot them, but bring them back alive. He was reputedly the first man to exhibit a pair of buffaloes in the New England states.

Winter did not deter Stephens from exhibiting. He took the bears and other undomesticated animals to the cities and exhibited them in halls. Frequently he rented out some animals to exhibitors. One winter he showed his buffaloes with the Kickapoo Medicine Company at Boston. This system "cut down the overhead", as he expressed it. For the animals would have to be fed, and without any revenue coming in, would quickly eat into the profits of the previous season.

While Ezra Stephens was the progenitor of the bannerline, he was not the originator of the bally stage, for he had no need for such a contrivance. He stood six feet, two inches in height. He always wore a checkered suit of the latest design, a tall, black beaver hat, while his fingers were adorned with a wealth of diamonds. A mustache of the handlebar type graced his upper lip and he was an imposing figure as he stood before his banners to extol the merits of the wonders within. "Outside work" was what ballyhoo was known as in those early days, and Ezra Stephens had a knack of keeping the attention of the crowd.

Stephens was always adding to his show, and at the time he retired from the show business he had a twenty-wagon outfit. He never took to the rails, because, as he said: "I am too old to consider a change; I'm thinking of retiring." And retire he did in 1892, spending his time at the store at Bryant Pond and in fox hunting in that section. One of his idiosyncracies was wearing a tall, beaver hat when setting forth on a fox hunt.

He died in 1899 and is buried at Bryant Pond.

A photo of Stephens, reproduced on the cover, shows the "Barnum of Maine" with Waino and Plutano.

# An Ex-Trooper Pulls a Circus Train

From the Old Scout "Dad" White 95, 96 in August

I was on the Burlington Railroad as a locomotive Engineer from 1889 to in the 1890's, I have forgotten the exact year, I got word that the P. T. Barnum Circus was coming on our road for three stands—Quincy, Macomb and Galesburg, Illinois.

I was living at Galesburg, Illinois, the Division Point so I went to the Master Mechanic and asked if I could pull one of the trains from Quincy to Galesburg. He knew that I had traveled with it so he said, "Yes, tell the Road Foreman", which I did. So when it was due at Quincy, my fireman had our engine there in the evening the Foreman asked me what trains I wanted, so I told him the cage train as all the performers and brass coaches was on it and my folks was on it—my Dad, Mother, sister and brother-in-law and their friends and mine. So in Macomb we cut the engine off, and I went back to the coaches and when my folks came out they looked at me. Dad asked, "What are you doing here?" So I told them that I had pulled them to Town. They all got around and said, "What do you think of a trouper pulling us to town." That night my Dad rode with me on the engine into Galesburg and that night as they loaded near my home, my folks and their friends came after the show and stayed, having Dutch lunch until the train master came after them. They all sure got a great kick out of it all. The next time the show came to Galesburg, Bill Smith, Boss over ring stock, gave me or had Mr. Bailey give me a running horse named Banjo, which had got loose in the cars and got cut pretty bad by other horses by being kicked.

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## Years Barnum & Bailey Played Richmond, Ind.

From Charles E. Duble, Associate Editor, Bandwagon

I have looked carefully through the seasons routes from 1872, the first year P. T. Barnum's Circus, Museum & Menagerie was on rail up to 1952, and Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey, and find that the years the circus appeared in Richmond, Indiana, were as follows: P. T. Barnum's Circus, Museum & Menagerie, July 15, 1872; October 1, 1875; and August 14, 1878. The title P. T. Barnum's Greatest Show On Earth, Howes Great London Circus, and Sanger's Royal British Menagerie was in use when the show came again May 25, 1883, and June 11, 1886.

Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show On Earth was the title when the show appeared again in Richmond, July 11, 1890; May 28, 1892; May 30, 1895; July 8, 1904; May 11, 1907, and August 23, 1909, which was the final appearance. The combined titles (Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey) has been used since 1919. Should the show appear in Richmond, as mentioned in The Bandwagon March issue, it should be indeed a red letter day after more than 40 years since the big show came to town. All roads will lead to Richmond that day.

Editor's Note: Thanks, Charley, for this research. The Editor and Secretary are looking forward to this with great anticipation. The Show has received quite a bit of publicity, because it has been so long in returning, and the Secretary has been in great demand in answering questions.

# Coronation Day in Brantford, Canada

Material sent in by Ed Cripps

Citizens of Brantford, Ontario, joined in celebrations which were many and colorful. It opened with prayers for the Queen and closed many hours later with a service in Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks. Intervening were parades, sports, circus, pageants and fireworks. Throughout the sun shone brilliantly. Thousands lined the downtown streets for a ceremony and a parade. King-Cristianni gave their parade. Everything was orderly—there were few accidents. One of these accidents to a circus performer is related in a newspaper article from the Brantford Expositor quoted below:

## Hundred Crippled, Blind Children Enjoy Circus

The delighted laughter of children, together with cries of bewilderment, wonder and surprise, rang out yesterday under the vast expanse of the Big Top as the circus, with all its glamour and fascination, unfolded before the eyes of hundreds of spectators at Agricultural Park.

There is a spirit of youth about the circus with its sawdust-covered rings, the clowns in their grotesquely painted faces, the animals, the be-spangled performers, and the cotton candy, cracker-jack, and ice cream. Adults became children again, sharing in the spontaneous joy of the boys and girls.

Enjoying this happy spectacle yesterday, were more than 100 blind and crippled children from the Ontario School for the Blind and from the Rotary Club's crippled children clinic.

"It was amazing," said one of the OSB teachers who accompanied the group, "how much the children seemed to see and hear. They all had the time of their lives."

The tickets for the OSB pupils were donated by the citizens of Brantford, and the crippled children were taken to the circus under the auspices of The Brantford Expositor.

It was a perfect circus day—blue skies with puffs of white clouds on the horizon. A strong southwest breeze straightened the flags on the tents and helped keep the swarms of people cool. Surrounding the tents and the midway, were dozens of brightly-colored trailers and circus wagons, the homes of the performers and employees of the circus. Little burros and horses dozed in the sun, tethered to the sides of the wagons. Throngs of children threaded their way through this village of vehicles, pausing now and then to pet the animals.

One group of little boys was seen roped together, the example of some thoughtful parents' precaution.

On the midway, standing on a pedestal over the heads of the crowd, a girl in black shorts held a six-foot python which curled itself around her neck and arms. "This snake is the smallest one in her collection," cried the barker, "but big enough to crush the bones of a horse or ox."

Dramatic billboards along the midway proclaimed the wonders within the tent: "The Fighting Lion," "The Human Volcano," "The King of Magic," "The Battle of Death," "The Viking Giant from Iceland, the biggest man in the world."

And under the Big Top, the aerialists, acrobats, tumblers, horse-back riders, and animal trainers, went through their acts with a grace and precision, marvellous to see.

Many weary children trudged home last night, clutching pennants, rubber monkeys, balloons and other souvenirs of the day. Perhaps some of them were sorry they had eaten so much cotton candy. Any-way, they were happy because they hadn't missed any of the fun. They'd seen the circus.

#### **Girl Performer**

What could have been a serious accident was averted at the King Brothers and Cristianni Circus on Tuesday by quick thinking on the part of a member of the troupe.

Miss S. Caroli, a high-wire artist, was balancing a bicycle on a wire 20 feet above the sawdust ring when the tire slipped, and she fell to the ground, the bicycle tumbling after. Her father was standing directly underneath when his daughter fell, and threw himself over the girl, receiving the impact of the falling cycle.

An ambulance was called to the scene and Miss Caroli was taken to hospital to be treated for sprains to her shoulder, arm and thigh. Mr. Caroli was uninjured.

Sergeant Thomas Blower and Morality Officer Bert Roshier, on duty at the circus, witnessed the accident.

The injured girl left today with the circus for Woodstock.

\* \* \*

The Circus played to 12,000 people. Mr. Cripps had his Brant Bros.  $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale show in the downtown circus ticket sale office prior to show date and also had a display of old circus heralds. The show was well received and gave three performances. It was estimated that 10,000 people saw the parade.

# Concerning the Origin of the John Robinson Circus and the Myth of 1824

By Richard E. Conover

The exact date of the founding of the John Robinson show is obscure. In the show's 1899 route book, when the Robinson family decided that it would be appropriate to have a 75th anniversary, they created it, giving rise to the myth of its founding in 1824. It is evident that the idea occurred to them earlier when an 1884 herald, which the writer now has, proclaimed "Our 60th Year." The legend was further perpetuated by Gil Robinson, second son of the founder in his book "Old Wagon Show Days" (Brockwell, 1925) when he observed the 100th anniversary in 1924. These publications are usually considered to be the authority on the subject. Considering the preponderance of contradictory evidence, this is unfortunate.

Four dates can be found for the birth of old John. The earliest of these is given in Gil's book as 1802. The next in line is 1804, as stated in the aforementioned route book. His tomb in Cincinnati gives it as July 22, 1807. Another publication, "Cincinnati, Past and Present" (1872), a sort of Who's Who of prominent Cincinnatians of that day, in a short biography of Robinson, places the date as 1808. This book was published a sufficient time previous to John's death to assume that he could have edited the story. Considering this, and the route book's and Gil's objective in having the old gentleman appear less of a boy-wonder by the act of acquiring a show at the age of sixteen, it is safe to assume that he was, in all probability, born in 1807 or 1808.

In disposing of the intervening years between his birth and the date of the founding of the circus, the Cincinnati biographical sketch and Gil's book agree in some respects. They both mention, substantially, the same shows that Robinson worked for before striking out on his own. However, the Cincinnati account spreads these associations over a greater number of years. Chronologically, the latter lists such early circuses as Colonel Page's Menagerie for a period of four years; Parsons and McCracken's for a like term; followed by Steward's Amphitheatre in Boston, and then with Hawkin's Circus, a show that came west and played in Cincinnati. Subsequent engagements as an independent performer included Benedict and Haddock, followed by one with the Zoological Institute, a Flatfoot organization which began to feature riding acts after the mid 1830's. John Glenroy, in his book "In and Out of Circus Life", lists a John Robinson as a four-horse rider on the Bacon and Derious Circus in 1838. This was old John's specialty. Also listed on the same program by Glenroy was one of John's early pupils, a James (or Juan) Hernandez, who was the first to use the name of James Robinson. Hernandez later reverted to using his own name and should not be confused with the famous Jimmy Robinson, one of the outstanding riders of all time.

In his last letter to the author, the late Colonel Sturtevant supplied the following additional data. (Source of his information unknown).

- (1) A newspaper account places Robinson on Raymond and Waring in 1839.
- (2) Robinson acted as ringmaster at a stock circus in Dudlow Smith's theatre in New Orleans in 1849 and definitely formed his first partnership with Gil Eldred at that time.
- (3) In 1926, after the publication of Gil Robinson's book, Sturtevant, while diplomatically kidding him about the tall tales related therein, was met with a grin, and they settled for a drink.

If this was the date of the first partnership with Eldred, it must have been of short duration, for there appeared in the 24th of May, 1842, issue of the Dayton (Ohio) Journal and Advertiser, a notice that the National Circus Company, Robinson and Foster, Proprietors, would appear in that city. With it were S. P. Stickney, billed as the "Great American Rider" and again, this Master Juan Hernandez.

From 1842 to 1852, there is a complete void in my information. After persistent efforts, I have uncovered nothing, nor does the 1899 route book of Gil Robinson's work mention anything specific. The Cincinnati biographical sketch states that the first Robinson Circus of any consequence was fitted out in that city in 1852. The first advertisements after 1842 carrying a Robinson name appeared in at least three towns in the vicinity of Dayton, Ohio, in 1854, when the Robinson and Eldred title was used.

The author would appreciate any additional information that will substantiate or refute his present conclusions that, while Robinson undoubtedly was in the circus business as an employee by or before 1824, there is no substantiation for the claim that this was the first year of the John Robinson Circus. From the evidence at hand, it would appear that the earliest date of its existence was 1840.

## D U E S

**From time to time I have members ask me when their dues are due. I am always glad to tell them. However, it is a simple matter to know when without the help of the Richmond office. Just look at your last membership card. In the upper right hand corner you will find an expiration date.**

Mrs. Fay Reed wishes to thank the members of the Circus Historical Society for the flowers sent at the time of the death of Fay Reed.

Mrs. James MacInnes also thanks us for the flowers sent at the time of Jim's illness. He is making steady progress toward recovery.

# The Great Eastern Circus

By Willard "Tard" Northrop

On June 3 and 4, 1881, the Great Eastern Circus gave its first show. It was a first class show. Talent included high class acts from Boston and New York, as well as some local acts.

John H. Gray, managed the local Opera house (Willimantic, Conn.), and Charles H. C. Wheeler was leader of the local band. These two men were the creators of the Great Eastern Circus. Mr. Gray had theatrical and entertainment experience. Mr. Wheeler was a talented musician and also a craftsman in many ways. It was Mr. Wheeler's handy work that transformed a farmwagon into a red and gold bandwagon and a bakerswagon into a gaudy ticket wagon, both profusely lettered and decorated.

On May 26, 1899, Mr. Wheeler leased the equipment from Mr. Gray. He opened on the lot at Valley and Walnut Streets in Willimantic, Conn. The local press had this to say, "The horseless circus, under the management of C. N. C. Wheeler, opened the season last night with a packed tent. The audience was well pleased. There were fifteen acts on the show, all very good."

The tent was a 2 poler, seating about 300 people, admission was 25 cents, reserve seats 10 cents. The concert or after show 15 cents. There was no side show. The rolling stock totaled 6 trucks, 2 horses to each truck. (These same horses were ridden bareback in the parade by costumed riders).

According to the press, Mr. Lee of Pawtucket, R.I., bought the paraphenalia of the Great Eastern Circus, on July 28, 1899. He operated it under the name of Lee Brothers Circus.

Willard "Tard" Northrop was property boy on this show, took care of parade and band uniforms and costumes; corralled boys (sometimes men) to wear a costume and ride a horse in the parade, or wear a band coat and hat and hold a horn as though he was playing it when riding in the bandwagon in the parade. Six regular players were in the band. Each performer cared for his equipment. After the parade "Tard" took a horse and buggy and gathered up all the circus posters from the store windows. This was an extra job. With this extra he made up to \$6.00 a week. Only the performers were boarded. He often got a break, however, and slept indoors with the performers. They were a grand lot of fellows.

Author's Note: This is the show I am modeling in miniature. Any and all help I may receive will assist me very much. I ask all friends to let me know of items that they recall, acts, pictures, names, records, etc. I do hope to make the Real McCoy. Write to Willard T. Northrop, Box No. 5, Shinapple, N. Y.

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The Wallace and Clark Show opening this year, 1953, was in Fredonia, Kansas, April 11.

# Fun and Thrills In Circus Show

From Cambridge Daily News, Cambridge, England, March 10, 1953

If, for your complete pleasure, a circus does not necessarily have to be under the Big Top, and if you feel that matting is as good as sawdust in the ring, then you will enjoy your visit to the New Theatre this week.

Within the limitations of the stage, the show presented by the Robert Brothers is slick, bright and interesting, and retains much of the excitement of the traditional tenting circus. The reception given last night by a better-than-usual first house, suggested that the hard-working performers will be hearing plenty of welcome applause while they are in Cambridge.

The main "spot" is, of course, reserved for the six spectacular African lions, which go through a variety of tricks under the kindly but authoritative hand of their trainer, Captain Sidney Howes.

## Lions—Or Kittens?

Whether he is marshalling the animals into a striking set-piece on a pyramid of boxes and stands, or simply persuading them to lie down side by side like a litter of kittens, Captain Howes makes his charges appear so amenable that we found ourselves thinking that his job was not so bad, after all. But then, we were watching from outside the cage . . .

This circus is particularly well served by acrobats and aerialists. The two attractive Sandow Sisters have a smoothly-executed trapeze routine with some unexpected and quite thrilling touches and, as if that is not enough, also "double" in solo acts—one with tricks on horseback and the other on a tight-rope.

A gentleman called Bernard, immaculate in dinner jacket, shows us some of the other uses to which—if you know how—a flying trapeze can be put. He swings to and fro standing on his head; then, still on his head, takes a drink; and finally—yes, still on his head—has another sip or two while at the same time lifting up his lady assistant with his free hand.

The Kempinskis present a novel jumping act, using hollow tubs and tables, while Charlotte and her male partner display strength and agility with steel perches of varying length and shape.

## Boxing Kangaroo

Going back to the animals, there is Aussie, the delightful boxing kangaroo, who gives a three-round exhibition. Sitting back on his tail as if it were a shooting stick, he spars away cheerfully and with enthusiasm.

Liberty ponies go through their paces with familiar grace and intelligence, and there is comedy and skill in the work of Dick's dogs and see-saw ponies, while a couple of mischievous chimpanzees produce more laughter as they chase their attendants, or upset the pole on which they are to do a tight-rope trick.

Finally, of course, there are the clowns—a likeable trio who are frequently in evidence with their special brand of fun and games.

The orchestra, under the direction of Leon T. Acland, give good service throughout.

# Report From Germany

Sent in by Fritz Dillenberg, Berlin, Germany

March 12th, 1953—"The February programme of the Circus Barlay, situated in the Russian part of Berlin, was the best one of the whole season. The team of 12 horses presented by the young but talented Swedish director Trolle Rhodin, were remarkable, also the Chimpanzees belonging to the same Circus. It was the first time since the termination of the war, that we saw again trained chimpanzees.

It was a pleasure to see the act of the 9 elephants of the Circus Benneweis from Denmark, presented by the young French trainer Depessemier. Jugglers, acrobats a.s.o. completed the program.

As I wrote already in a former article, the clowns are not allowed to use paint for their faces nor can they present scenes which diminish the esteem of the human being, for instance clowns are not allowed to box each others ears, and the whole entree is based on politics.

The March program of the Circus Barlay presents as a special attraction a groupe of 8 tigers trained by Mr. Kramel. The tigers have been imported 2 years ago from India by the Wild Animal firm Ruhe in Hannover. Also this groupe is the first one consisting of freshly imported animals, since the termination of the war. This groupe is presented very lively by Manfred Benneweis.

Next month the well-known Circus Paula Busch which last year played with much success in Berlin, will start the summer tour. I shall report about it in due course.

I would like to mention that the film "The Greatest Show on Earth" has been shown over here with success. I myself was a little disappointed, as I do not approve of circus films which present killing and murder. It would have been interesting if one had seen also pictures of the stables a.s.o."

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## NEW MEMBERS

Hobart W. Hopper, No. 537  
2916 Wilbrahan Road,  
Middletown, Ohio

Don Francis, No. 538  
750 O'Farrel,  
San Francisco 9, Calif.

Frank H. Runser, No. 539  
611½ Walnut St.,  
Fort Wayne 6, Indiana

Harold S. Harris, No. 540  
P. O. Box 1545,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia,  
Canada

JIM RATLIFF thinks our public might like this jollie:

Joe: How do you get down off an elephant?

Jack: You climb down.

Joe: Wrong.

Jack: You grease his sides and slide down.

Joe: Wrong.

Jack: You take a ladder and get down.

Joe: Wrong.

Jack: You slide down his trunk.

Joe: No, not quite. You don't get down off an elephant. You get it off a goose.

—Reprinted from Cincinnati Enquirer

# Kelly-Miller Puts It Up Twice, Takes It Down Once!

By Bob King

Tuesday, June 9, in Wilmington, Ohio, will be a day that the Kelly-Miller Circus will remember a long time, as will many others who were over there. It was one of those hot, beautiful June days, that we all dream about. The sun shone brightly, 'till about 2:30 in the afternoon, when it clouded up and a little rain fell. At first, not too much, but as the afternoon progressed, so did the rain. By the time the matinee was over, there was a torrential rainfall, and those who had attended the show huddled in the horse top to keep dry. Then the wind began to blow. By the time the concert was over, the wind had attained a pretty good speed; all the canvas was flapping wildly.

It was decided by Obert Miller that everyone had better get out of the horse top, and the bulls were taken out into the rain. (They, the bulls, were getting a little restless). Just as the last person left the horse top, the Big Top blew over. As the last horse went out of the top, the horse top went down, too. The side show top was down. Working men dropped the marquee and the giraffe top very quickly. Still it blew and it rained. But the cook house stood like it was a rock in the path of the wind.

At 5 o'clock the rain was over, the wind had stopped, and what a mess it looked. Everything flat on the ground—soaking wet and muddy. To the writer the question came, "What now?"

At 10 after five, under the direction of D. R. Miller, all available help went to work to put the top back up into the air. The stake line was moved about 10 feet to the left, and bulls started pulling up the quarter poles—stakes were driven by hand in many cases—and the big top went up. Also the side show top went back into the air. When the big one was up, it was discovered that there was not too much damage done. There were 2 or 3 pretty good sized rips in the top, a few seat stringers were broken as well as a few jacks. The Hanel's rigging was badly bent, as well as some few other pieces of equipment. Maybe a few seat planks were lost. But all in all, everything looked a lot better than I ever thought it could have. To top it off, the night show went on as scheduled—to a better than  $\frac{3}{4}$  house. This despite the fact that radio in surrounding towns had broadcast the blow down, along with the information that there would be no night show.

Especial praise is due to Pete Smith and canvas crew; to Ringtail and the seat crew; to Fred Logan and the elephant men; to all the clowns and other performers, for the way they all pitched in and got with it. Everyone who could do anything got out and helped. That included the writer, too.

We may be able to run a photo of the blow-down in the next issue.

Editor's Note: If you could have seen him when he got home at 4:00 A.M., you would have thought he'd been blown down, too. —Agnes.

—Bandwagon, June Issue, 1953—Page 15



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